

REMARKS

In response to the above Office Action, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 2, which has been cancelled. More particularly, claim 1 now includes the feature "at least one end of the resin receiving plate in the axial direction having a resin flow preventive movable dam that is linearly movable in the axial direction of the workpiece." This feature is described on page 34, lines 20-27 and in FIG. 4. Claims 6 and 28 have been amended to correct typographical errors.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-15 and 27-31 over copending application No. 12/155,818 for obviousness-type double patenting. However, this application is a divisional of that application and was filed as a result of the election of method claims in response to the Restriction Requirement of December 18, 2007. This divisional application, as a result of a Preliminary Amendment filed in the case, is limited to the non-elected apparatus claims. Thus in accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §121 and M.P.E.P. §804.01, this rejection is not proper. Its withdrawal is, therefore, requested.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-9, 13-15 and 28-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) for being anticipated by Ogata (JP 2003-241397). However, Ogata does not disclose the above feature added to claim 1. In Ogata, the liquid photosensitive resin is directly applied to the outer surface of the cylinder from the liquid photosensitive resin feed mechanism 120, whereas according to the present invention, the liquid-state photosensitive resin 10 is firstly supplied to a resin receiving plate 150 having a resin flow preventing movable dam 153 and is then applied to the workpiece 70. This method has the advantage of hardly producing air bubbles before the liquid-state photosensitive resin 10 is applied to the workpiece 70.

Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims for being anticipated by Ogata is, therefore, requested.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 29 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Watanabe (JP 2002-079645) in view of Bode et al. (EP 1,158,365), hereafter Bode.

In making this rejection, the Examiner acknowledges that Watanabe does not disclose the feature added to claim 1. See page 5, last sentence of first paragraph of the Office Action. However, the Examiner argues that Bode discloses a coating roll and a container for the coating liquid, both mounted on "a coating table." Since the coating table can be moved parallel to the axis of the printing cylinder, that this somehow is the equivalent of a "preventive movable dam" that could be included in the device of Watanabe. See paragraph [0035] of Bode. It is unfortunate that Bode has no drawings, but from this description it appears the device of Bode can be illustrated as shown in the attached Exhibit A prepared by Applicants. Note the last sentence of paragraph [0035], omitted by the Examiner, that the "coating roll dips with the lower part into the coating liquid."

This is quite different from the mechanism shown in FIG. 4 of this application where at least one resin flow preventive dam 153 at at least one end of the resin supplying plate 151 for receiving the photosensitive resin, is movable in the axial direction of the workpiece 70 and the process steps performed by it with respect to both coating width and coating thickness.

(1) Coating width

Coating width can be set according to the present invention by the resin flow preventive movable dam being linearly movable. In contrast, the coating width according to Bode is limited to the width of the coating roll. In addition, when the liquid is applied in a spiral manner according to Bode, the coating width is limited to a multiple of the width of the coating roll. Thus the resin has to be applied while carefully paying attention to avoid gaps and overlapping parts.

(2) Coating thickness

Coating thickness can be set by gradually separating the distance between the resin receiving plate 151 and the workpiece 70 and by controlling the quantity supplied to the resin receiving plate 151. In contrast, Bode employs a control method by use of rotation speed, as described in paragraph [0018] of Bode, "The uniformity and thickness of the coating can be controlled by rotation of the printing cylinder, rotation of the coating roll and linear speed of a coating table, which supports the coating roll and the container for the coating liquid. Faster roll rotation results in higher wet coating weight. The method coats very clean edges at coating start and end of the cylinder simply by moving the coating roll up and down for start and finish." In other words, the control method of Bode is an unstable method dependent on the viscosity of the application liquid.

In any event, Bode, merely by disclosing a three-way movable "coating table," does not disclose anything similar to the claimed linearly movable resin flow preventive dam or the control of the width of the coating with it. Thus regardless of how it is combined with Watanabe, the combination does not render claim 1 obvious.

As required by M.P.E.P. §2143.03, "all words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." Moreover, as noted in M.P.E.P. §2143.02, to support a conclusion that a claim would have been obvious, "all the claimed elements" must have been known in the prior art and the Examiner has not shown where the above-noted feature of Applicants' invention is shown in Bode.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 for being obvious over Watanabe in view of Bode is, therefore, requested. Since claims 3, 5 and 29 all depend from claim 1, it is believed they are also not obvious over this combination of references for the same reason.

While the Examiner rejected claim 4 for being obvious over Watanabe in view of Bode, further in view of Kozaki et al. (US 2002/0187429) and claim 27 further in view of Torisawa (US 2002/0186294), these claims also depend from claim 1 and do not describe what is missing in Watanabe and Bode as discussed above, so it is submitted they are also not obvious over the cited combinations of references.

It is believed claims 1, 3-15 and 27-31 are in condition for allowance.

An RCE is being filed with this Reply to enable the Examiner to consider the amended claims at this time.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Exhibit A

